

The Rockville mayor's job was eliminated upon completion of the merger. So, in the end, Leo Flaherty worked himself out of a job. But Leo Flaherty never regretted his actions because he knew that this was the right thing to do, not for him, but for his community.

The final political office that he ever held was chairman of Connecticut's members of the Electoral College, which chooses the President. True to form and his principles, his first act in this position was to call for the elimination of the college. He always believed that the popular vote should prevail.

His tenure as an attorney lasted even longer than his political career. Leo Flaherty earned a reputation as a lawyer who would help anyone. Oftentimes he found himself representing some of society's undesirables, but he never wavered in his belief that every individual, rich or poor, had certain rights and was entitled to effective legal representation. He never sought the high powered clients, and he never became a millionaire. But, as was said after his passing, Leo Flaherty died a rich man because he owned his soul.

In a 1996 interview, Leo Flaherty said that he had no intention of retiring unless he had to. This prophecy was fulfilled. He worked until his body would no longer allow it, as he contracted Lou Gehrig's disease—a terminal degenerative nerve condition.

Leo Flaherty was a man whom I looked up to with the highest respect and admiration. He will be dearly missed.●

GERALD R. AND BETTY FORD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

● Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I rise today, pleased to urge bipartisan support for and passage of H.R. 3506, the Gerald R. and Betty Ford Congressional Gold Medal Act.

Mr. President, this bill commemorates a number of anniversaries that few individuals succeed in reaching. This year is quite a milestone for our former thirty-eight President and First Lady. First and foremost, Gerald Ford celebrated his 85th birthday on July 14 and Betty Ford celebrated her 80th birthday on April 8.

This October marks another anniversary well worth mentioning—the 50th wedding anniversary of Gerald and Betty Ford. In 1948, they were wed only a few weeks before Gerald Ford won his first term in the House of Representatives. The Fords returned to Washington every term thereafter until 1974. Gerald Ford served as House Minority Leader from 1965 to 1973.

And finally Mr. President, this year commemorates the 25th anniversary of Gerald Ford becoming the first Vice President chosen under the terms of the Twenty-fifth Amendment. Less than a year later, he succeeded the first President ever to resign.

President and First Lady Ford led our country with bravery and dignity

during a time that he declared upon his inauguration, "... troubles our minds and hurts our hearts." Gerald Ford was faced with seemingly unsurmountable tasks when he took the oath of office of the Presidency on August 9, 1974. There were the challenges of mastering inflation, reviving a depressed economy, solving chronic energy shortages, and trying to ensure world peace.

For their first twenty five years in Washington, Betty Ford not only was instrumental in rearing the four Ford children, she supervised the home, did the cooking, undertook volunteer work, and took part in the "House wives" and "Senate wives" for Congressional and Republican clubs. In addition, she was an effective campaigner for her husband. In 1974, Mrs. Ford set aside personal need for privacy when she openly discussed her experience from radical surgery for breast cancer. She reassured troubled women across the country with her openness, care and bravery.

H.R. 3506, a bill authorizing the President to award Gerald R. and Betty Ford the congressional gold medal, passed the House by unanimous consent on July 29, 1998. It is my sincere hope that the Senate act expeditiously on this legislation.

Mr. President, this honor, the highest award bestowed by the United States Congress, is a fitting tribute to life-long public service and dedication bestowed upon the American people by the thirty-eight President and First Lady, Gerald and Betty Ford. In addition, it is a wonderful way for all of Congress to commemorate and congratulate the Fords on their fifty years of commitment to one another. On behalf of all my colleagues, I wish them many more happy years together.●

VIRGINIA S. BAKER

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to pay special tribute to a special lady who passed away Wednesday July 30, 1998 in Baltimore, Maryland. Virginia S. Baker was special to me, my family and the entire city of Baltimore.

Virginia Baker started as a volunteer playground monitor in Baltimore, where she brought joy and fun to the city's streets and neighborhoods. But more importantly, she always kept an eagle eye out for the children with a broken heart or the ones from a broken home. Without notice she would find a way to bring those children into her circle of compassion, to let them know they always had a home at her recreation center. She had the special gift of mending children's hearts.

She came to serve in the recreation departments of nine Baltimore Mayors and always made sure children had a safe place to play. When I was a City Councilwoman I became friendly with Virginia because she was always hustling the City Council for more money. She took me to the playgrounds and community events, got me

to play hopscotch, and got me leap-frogging over the bureaucracy to ensure strong community programs for the city of Baltimore. Virginia was also friends with my dear mother. My mother volunteered for me for several years when I served on the Baltimore City Council. When my schedule wouldn't allow me to tour the city streets, Virginia would take Pearl, her assistant, and my mother out to visit the senior centers and community playgrounds. They would never forget to stop at Faidley's for a crabcake, Greektown for a few stuffed grape leaves, or countless other diners and snack shops where Baltimoreans gathered.

Virginia Baker was just a special person. She had a God-given gift of compassion and caring and used it selflessly. Today, I have humbly tried to express my personal experience with Virginia and her gift. I also request the Baltimore Sun article on Virginia's life be printed in the record. It really expresses Virginia's effect on Baltimore and its citizens best.

The article follows:

[From the Baltimore Sun, July 31, 1998]
CITY'S QUEEN OF FUN DIES AT 76—VIRGINIA BAKER RAN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
(By Rafael Alvarez)

Baltimore's oldest kid has died at the age of 76.

Virginia S. Baker—who began her career in fun and games as an East Baltimore playground monitor in 1940 and hopscotched her way up to City Hall in the silly-hat regime of William Donald Schaefer—died yesterday at St. Joseph Medical Center of complications from pneumonia.

"I've made a lot of kids happy," she said in a 1995 interview. "That's what I get paid for."

Never married, Miss Baker counted generations of Baltimore youngsters as her own special brood.

Her secret?

The girl who grew up as "Queenie" in her father's confectionary at Belnord Avenue and Monument Street—where she honed her child-like playfulness and steely resolve—never stopped thinking like a kid.

In a century that whittled an American child's idea of a good time down to pushing buttons on plastic gadgets, Miss Baker championed timeless fun: hog-calling contests, frog-jumping races, turtle derbies, sack races, beanbag tosses, peanut shucking and doll shows.

"And don't forget her annual Elvis salute," said Sue McCardell, Miss Baker's longtime assistant in the Department of Recreation and Parks. "We'll keep going with all the things Virginia started."

Bob Wall, a recreation programmer in Patterson Park—where the rec center is named in Miss Baker's honor—first met his mentor as an 11-year-old Little Leaguer in 1968.

"It was a Saturday and our game was rained out and we were walking past the rec center in our uniforms. I'd never been inside it before," Mr. Wall remembered. "This boisterous lady yelled out to us: 'You boys want to catch frogs for me today?'"

Of course they did. And that was Mr. Wall's initiation into a world he unexpectedly found himself eulogizing yesterday when the city's 58th annual doll show—launched by Miss Baker at the start of her career—coincided with her death.

"We had a moment of silence," said Mr. Wall. "And then we said the show's got to go on."